

WASHINGTON POST
23 March 1984

Salvadoran Police Chief Denies Link To CIA, Tells of Death Squad Probe

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Washington Post Foreign Service

SAN SALVADOR, March 22—The head of El Salvador's Treasury Police today denied a report that he has been a paid informant of the CIA since the late 1970s.

The New York Times, in this morning's editions, quoted U.S. officials as saying that the chief, Col. Nicolas Carranza, had received \$90,000 a year for each of the past five or six years from the CIA.

"I have had no relations with anybody from the CIA," Carranza told reporters at an informal news conference at Treasury Police headquarters. He suggested that American officials had made the allegations to harm his career, although he did not explain why they would do so.

Carranza, 51, also said that the Defense Ministry was investigating allegations in a previous report by The Times that senior Salvadoran military officials, including rightist presidential candidate Roberto D'Aubuisson, had organized a network of death squads that has terrorized alleged leftist sympathizers in El Salvador.

The Armed Forces spokesman, Lt. Col. Ricardo Cienfuegos, confirmed that the investigation was under way.

That report cited the account of a former Salvadoran military official whom Carranza identified as retired Col. Roberto Eulalio Santivanez. Carranza was the first Salvadoran official to identify the source publicly, although he was closely followed tonight by D'Aubuisson, who named another official. The Times

account did not name the official, nor did a follow-up story saying the informant was promised \$50,000 by American critics of U.S. policy in Central America.

Santivanez was head of a secret intelligence unit, called ANSESAL, in the office of the presidency until he and about 70 other officers were forcibly retired after the October 1979 coup by reformist military officers. Santivanez had access to military intelligence information and thus would be in a good position to describe the formation and running of the assassination teams, Salvadoran military sources said.

The Defense Ministry currently "is investigating whether Santivanez told the truth," Carranza said. Carranza previously has denied having any tie to death squads.

Carranza, in a swipe at the death-squads account, said, "Col. Roberto Santivanez made these declarations, but later there appeared 50,000 good reasons for him to do it."

D'Aubuisson, in his separate news conference, said that according to his information the source of the death squad allegations was "Lt. Col. Alfaro." Alfaro, he added, worked in the National Police's Criminal Investigation Section and thus had access to some intelligence reports.

Salvadoran military sources said D'Aubuisson apparently was referring to Maj. Leonel Alberto Alfaro, who worked with the National Police before the 1979 officers' coup.

D'Aubuisson declared that the reports of money being paid to the informant referred to in The Times'

March 3 story proved he was a "false witness."

"Several months ago, I advised you that money was being offered so people would go around speaking as false witnesses," he said. "We told you to investigate, because we found out that they were paying money, to see who was paying so that they would go around speaking as false witnesses for Mr. White's affairs. I believe that now I see that I was not mistaken."

Robert E. White, who was U.S. ambassador here during the Carter administration, has been a leading figure in accusations against D'Aubuisson and others in connection with El Salvador's death squads.

D'Aubuisson also defended Carranza, saying he has known him since his days as a cadet in the Military Academy. "I believe he is a good man, a good soldier, a good Salvadoran," he said.

The Treasury Police is one of El Salvador's three security forces and has a reputation for being the most brutal. Carranza's chief of intelligence in the Treasury Police, Maj. Jose Ricardo Pozo, was assigned to be military attache in Paraguay in early January after the U.S. government urged his transfer abroad because of alleged links with death squad activity.

Carranza said his only relations with U.S. officials were with U.S. military advisers here and that those were only "technical."

U.S. Embassy spokesman Donald Hamilton declined to comment on the report naming Carranza as a CIA informant. "We have a longstanding

policy of not commenting on allegations of intelligence matters," Hamilton said.

Washington Post correspondent Edward Cody contributed to this story.